

# CLEAN WATER ACT INDIAN SET-ASIDE GRANT PROGRAM



## SUCCESS STORIES

### Savoonga Community Wastewater Facility, Alaska

The Alaskan Native Village of Savoonga is located on the northern coast of St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea, 164 miles west of Nome. It is a traditional Eskimo village with a subsistence lifestyle consisting of walrus and whale hunting.

The village's utilities are operated by Savoonga Joint Utilities, a non-profit arm of the City, and are run by a Utility Board. Prior to the grant project, the community's existing water/wastewater system included watering points and a honey bucket haul system. Wastewater was collected by the city's honey bucket haul system and was disposed of in a honey bucket lagoon located 1.6 km east of the community. The washeteria disposed of wash water in an adjacent rocky stream bed, while the school and the clinic disposed of waste to a biopure plant which discharged treated wastewater to the beach. Well water was treated and stored in a 100,000 gallon tank at the washeteria and was hauled to individual homes by residents.



In 1996 and 1997, the Clean Water Act Indian Set-Aside Program (CWA ISA) awarded grants in the amount of \$1,000,000 and \$360,000 respectively to support a phased approach by the community to provide a vacuum wastewater collection system, as well as a circulating water distribution system. (The drinking water portion of the project was funded separately by the Indian Health Service). Both water and wastewater service will be provided through a shared above ground

metal utilidor. The utilidor was selected over arctic pipe due to its comparative ease of maintenance and its low profile and minimal impact on above ground activity. Wastewater will be pumped from the vacuum collection tank through a force main to a facultative wastewater lagoon. The lagoon will be discharged annually during the fall rains. Approximately 165 residential households, 7 commercial facilities, the washeteria, and the city building will be served by this system. The service will be separated into South, West and North loops, each serving approximately 50 - 60 households.

The first ISA grant project included construction of a 1600 meter long, above-ground force main, a 2.5 hectare wastewater lagoon, and a 524 meter long access road. The second grant included extending the utilidor to the most southern leg of the South Loop. Work is expected to be completed on the second grant by 2002.

EPA's Clean Water Indian Set-Aside Program funding of \$1.3 million enabled a portion of the Savoonga residents to go from a honey bucket haul system to a centralized piped wastewater treatment system. The project was successful in that the Village of Savoonga, the City and IHS made a long term commitment to work together to upgrade the facilities of the village and increase the village's capacity to manage them.